



# Colorado Smelter

## *fact sheet*



Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 8 • SEPT 2012

## Sampling and Cleanup

### Introduction

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide information regarding sampling and potential cleanup at the Colorado Smelter Site. Many questions come up when a site may be proposed to the National Priorities List (NPL). At this point in the process it is too early to have specific answers to the many questions individuals may have. Following are some of the questions that have already been raised.

### Sampling

#### ***In the most recent sampling, what did Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment sample for and what was found?***

In 2010, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (state health department) collected samples from the waste (slag) pile, soil, surface water and sediment analyzing them for heavy metals. During this preliminary site investigation, 47 properties near the Colorado Smelter were sampled. Out of those, about one-third came back with elevated levels of lead and/or arsenic signaling further action needs to be taken. The data collected from the soils and large slag pile are the reason the site is a

candidate for listing on the National Priorities List (NPL).

#### ***Where can I find results from the sampling and other information?***

Sampling results and other information can be found in the Analytical Results Report at

[www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/co/colosmelter](http://www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/co/colosmelter).

#### ***How deep will you test for contamination on residential property?***

Once a site is listed, thorough investigations are completed to determine what and how much needs to be cleaned up.

- ◆ Generally, residential soils are tested to a depth of 18-24 inches, but every site is different. Samples are taken at different depths to determine how deep the contamination is.
- ◆ Samples are taken in the front, back and on the sides of a property. In each of these locations several samples will be collected to determine where there is contamination.

#### ***Does each property owner have the right to say yes or no to being tested?***

Yes, for residential properties EPA and the state health department need voluntary access from the property owner before sampling can be done.

### Cleanup

#### ***What are the procedures if yards are torn up?***

Once a site is listed, a remedy for cleanup will be selected with community input. Based on information found during the remedial investigation, each yard

*(Continues on reverse)*



**Colorado Smelting Company Refinery**

will be studied to determine if a cleanup is even needed and if so, what sections need to be cleaned up, or if the whole yard needs a cleanup.

Before work can begin, EPA will again need access from the owner. Next, the project manager will meet with the property owner to go over an action plan for the work to be completed on their property. This will also require a property owner's signature.

***If a cleanup is required, can I refuse the cleanup?***

Cleanup actions on residential properties are voluntary, and EPA does not typically force residential property owners to participate. However, the cleanup is free, reduces health risks and may benefit you in the future if you sell your property.

***If dirt is replaced, how deep will you dig?***

This depends on how far down contamination is found and the cleanup levels chosen based on the more detailed Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study( RI/FS) after the site is placed on the NPL.

At other sites, EPA has dug down anywhere from 2 -24 inches, depending on the contamination levels. Contamination levels are different at every site.

***Does EPA replace the vegetation when the soil is cleaned up?***

The EPA project manager will evaluate each property requiring cleanup and develop a cleanup plan. EPA discusses this plan with the property owner prior to cleanup.

The property plan identifies the areas that will be cleaned, what will be removed, and what will be replaced. The property owner at that time can agree to the cleanup or not.

EPA's practice is to restore a property to its previous condition or as close to its previous condition as possible. Anything in the area may be removed in order to remove the contaminated soil. Any grass, trees, shrubs, etc. that are removed during the cleanup will be replaced.

***What if a property is tested and no contamination was found?***

EPA can issue a letter to the owner indicating the property did not need a cleanup.

***How will the slag piles from the Colorado Smelter be cleaned up?***

The slag piles at the Colorado Smelter will have to be investigated further to determine the best remedy/ remedies. Every cleanup has different conditions and situations that must be taken into account.

The decision on how the slag piles are addressed will be included in the RI/FS and also in the proposed (cleanup) plan, which includes a public comment period.

***How will alleys and open spaces be cleaned up?***

If the site is listed, these areas will be evaluated during the RI/FS phase. In its initial sampling study, EPA has focused its efforts where people spend most of their time.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BE PLACED ON OUR MAILING LIST CONTACT THE FOLLOWING:**

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**OR VISIT US AT [www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/co/colosmelter](http://www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/co/colosmelter)**